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ASSESSMENT OF SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES' PERFORMANCE OF CITIZEN-CENTRIC INVESTMENT PLANNING, AND SUPPORT FOR YOUTH PROGRAMMING IN KOSOVO

Florentina Hajdari- Hajra

Ph.D. Student, Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences,
South East European University, Tetovo, North Macedonia
florentina.hajdari@gmail.com

Artan Binaku

Ph.D. Student, Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences,
South East European University, Tetovo, North Macedonia
artan.binaku@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to assess selected municipalities' performance of citizen-centric investment planning, governance and transparency, financial management, and support for youth programming in Kosovo. In completing this assessment, the Municipal Performance Management System of the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA) in Kosovo was utilized. Selected municipalities are based on the Municipal Performance Report of 2019. Eight from Albanian majority municipalities in the top ranking, and two municipalities with higher scores from minority municipalities. The paper aims to highlight three critical local government issues in ten selected municipalities: 1) The way of governing municipalities assessed according to the applicable legislation and 2) The provision of services in terms of quantity and quality, when possible and 3) Youth-oriented capacity building for municipal staff for better youth services (Ministry of Local Government Administration, 2019). The paper will produce findings on capacity building needs and support needed on youth and citizen-centric

investment and capacity building needs. A non-exhaustive list of needed capacities is produced, while the findings from the evaluation will be used to develop a capacity-building manual for municipal staff on youth-oriented municipal services.

Keywords: Municipalities, investment, planning, capacity, youth.

INTRODUCTION

In 2009, Kosovo Parliament approved the Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth. The Law intends to empower youth in taking part in the central and local decision processes, with the final aim of their empowerment. The Law aspires to 'develop a democratic society, to improve the quality of life of youth and their social status.' (Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth, 2009). The Law provides essential 'responsibilities for strengthening the youth sector in Kosovo and supporting youth participation in decision-making and central and local government institutions responsibilities' (Ibid). These institutional obligations are related to young people and youth organizations in relevant areas regulated by this Law, voluntary work, and informal education'. (Ibid). The Law above provides the legal basis for establishing local youth organizations that allow youth participation at central and local levels in Kosovo, meaning Local Youth Action Councils and Central Youth Action Councils. The Law also stipulates the responsibilities that municipalities have in the process; concretely, article 7.1 obliges municipalities to provide youth organizations with financial resources, space, support for informal education, and the development of municipal youth policies. In addition to the Law above, the Law on Local Government approved in 2008, in its Chapter IX, Direct Democracy and Citizen Participation Mechanisms, stipulates institutional responsibilities for public information and consultation.

Specifically, 'municipalities are obliged to inform the citizens of the Municipality of any necessary plans or programs of public interest'. (Law on Local Self-Governance, 2008) On top of the information sharing obligation that municipalities and institutions in Kosovo have, they are obliged to incorporate public and youth in decision-making processes when drafting public policies and developing budgets. Furthermore, 'municipal Assemblies shall adopt municipal regulation promoting the transparency of the municipalities' legislative, executive, and administrative bodies, enhancing public participation in the decision-making at the local level, and facilitating public access to official documents of the municipalities'. (Ibid). Further, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of Kosovo has approved an Administrative

Instruction AI 10/2010 on the Volunteer Work of Youth and sets out procedures for youth and institutions' obligations to facilitate these obligations.

In assessing the capacities of ten municipalities in citizen-centric investment planning, governance and transparency, financial management, and support for youth programming, ten municipalities have been surveyed and provided information on these themes. The questionnaire contained municipal competencies, capacity needs, budget, and which fields the municipalities need assistance from. The questionnaire had eight questions in total, answered in-person, including questions on municipal youth-oriented services/facilities and budget allocations, training needs of municipal staff, youth volunteers profile needed, and the capacity to supervise and technically accept subgrants that contain capital investments. Through these questions, evaluation on capacities has been assessed. In addition, meeting with mayors, deputy mayors, directors of education, youth officers, and youth coordinators were held in ten municipalities. Municipalities involved in the exercise were Glllogoc, Hani Elezit, Rahovec Skenderaj, Vushtrri, Junik, Kaçanik, Ferizaj, Ranillug, and Zveçan. The report aims to highlight three key issues: 1) The way of governing municipalities assessed according to the applicable legislation and 2) The provision of services in terms of quantity and quality, when possible and 3) Youth-oriented capacity building for municipal staff for better youth services (Ministry of Local Government Administration, 2019).

MLGA's Municipal Performance Management System (MPMS) was used to select municipalities. MPMS has measured the performance of municipalities in different 19 fields with 119 measurement indicators, covering areas such as transparency, financial management, service delivery, environmental protection, and youth-oriented planning, decision-making, and activities. The ten municipalities include eight Albanian-majority municipalities and two minority municipalities.

MUNICIPALITIES PERFORMANCE AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Nineteen fields of the municipal performance management shown in the Municipal Performance Report system summarize a reasonably wide range of municipal competencies. (Ministry of Local Government Administration, 2020.) Furthermore, they express the rights and obligations that municipalities exercise to serve citizens based on legal competencies (Ibid). The indicators were used to provide considerable information on the level of services offered. The data obtained from this system 'provide clear indications to the municipal management and stakeholders about the interventions, the extension of priorities, and the achievement of the intended objectives' (Municipal Performance Management System, 2019).

Table 1. shows the best ten ranked municipalities from 38 in total, on which further assessment has been done on this research to analyze the capacities and needs of the best-ranked municipalities when it comes to youth-oriented projects.

NO	Municipality	Performance Scores 2019	Youth Population (15-19)	Youth population (20-24)
1	Ranillug	31	308	328
2	Junik	63	572	552
3	Hani i Elezit	53	900	831
4	Zvecan	37	0	0
5	Kaçanik	59	3393	3161
6	Skenderaj	57	5243	5088
7	Rahovec	68	6253	5380
8	Glllogovc	72	5886	6230
9	Vushtrri	57	7085	6607
10	Ferizaj	55	10985	9850
	TOTAL		40625	38027

Table 1: Municipalities by Performance Score, Youth Population and co-financing amount- Data on population used from the Kosovo Agency of Statistics-2011-Country Census

From the 19 fields of performance measurement, this report will focus on the ten selected municipalities achievements and municipal performances on five domains:

- Municipal transparency
- Equality employment, social services, and public spaces
- Culture, youth, and sports
- Gender representation
- Pre-university education

Besides the abovementioned fields from the Performance Management System, the report will evaluate the level of:

- Pieces of training are needed of the municipal staff.
- Youth volunteers' profiles to improve municipal provided services
- Youth-oriented budgets
- Present municipal youth facilities
- Capacity on evaluating, supervising, and technical acceptance of sub-projects related to youth projects

According to the percentages presented in Figure 1, the Municipality with the 'highest performance is Glllogoc with 77.04%, followed by Hani i Elezit with 75.78 and Rahovec with 75.20%. It should be noted that with the review of indicators for this reporting year, the

performance of many service indicators is measured per capita in the Municipality or per square kilometer of the respective Municipality' (Municipal Performance Report, 2020).

Municipal Transparency

This area has seven indicators to ensure access to municipal data, attend assembly meetings, raise 'information standards through websites, budget transparency, and public procurement. (Ibid) The overall performance achieved in transparency is 72.93%' (Municipal Performance Report, 2019). Vushtrri (100%), Kaçanik (100%), Glllogoc (100%), Rahovec (98.95%), Ferizaj (98.13%), Hani i Elezit (92.00%), Skenderaj (85.08%) while the municipalities who lack in Municipal Transparency are Ranilluga (53.25%) and Zvecan with only (0.15%).

Equality in Employment, Social and Family Services

This field of 'two outcomes and four indicators cover the representation of different groups in municipal employment' and the social services of the most disadvantaged municipalities. (Ibid) Within employment, indicators measure the level of employment of persons with disabilities in municipal institutions and the percentage of inclusion of non-majority communities. (Ibid) Overall performance in this field is 57.70%.

Culture, Youth, and Sports

Within this field, 'municipal cultural, youth and sports activities are measured as one of the own competencies of municipalities' (Ibid). Therefore, the area also covers services provided by municipalities related to culture, youth, and sports, including sports facilities. This 'field measures performance by comparing it to the number of inhabitants for' more balanced towards municipalities with many inhabitants and fewer inhabitants. This field has an overall performance of 67.99% (Ibid). Thus, there is no significant difference from the ten municipalities selected that must be highlighted.

Gender Representation

Gender representation is now more widely measured, including the access of both genders to social and economic development programs and municipal activities. Also, 'the indicators measure the degree of representation of both genders in local institutions, bodies of municipal assemblies' (Ibid). However, despite the progress of municipalities over the years in ensuring equal representation in the bodies of assemblies and municipal committees, the data for specific indicators minimize the percentage in this area, making it relatively low, 38.24%. Gender representation in local councils is deficient, and the vast majority of municipalities do not have any women leading these councils. This also considers that almost half of the municipalities do not have functional local councils, as shown in the third area. Furthermore, gender representation in the names of municipal roads is deficient, and 'the registration of property in the name of a woman or both genders (husband or brothers and sisters)' (Ibid). From the ten selected municipalities, % achieved by municipalities – gender representation varies from 29.8 % Ranillug to 59.1 % Junik.

Gender-responsive budgeting and spending turn 'out to be done by just over half of the municipalities. However, there is a great need for training in this regard and the will of municipalities to understand the importance of this issue. Gender equality in budgeting for subsidies and the program of the Municipality is at a very low level of 36.33% and this should be raised to the level of equality of 50%'. (Ministry of Local Governance Administration, 2020). Women, including young women, are underrepresented in decision-making and employment in public institutions in Kosovo. Young women who are "very interested" in political issues account for 16.1% compared to 18.7% of young men, indicating future disengagement of women in decision-making in public institutions. In 2018, among 6,148 civil servants employed in 38 municipal administrations, only 33.4% were women.

Pre-University Education

This indicator aims at 'results in spaces for kindergartens and schools equipped with internet cabinets, energy efficiency measures, recruitment of educational staff, teacher licensing, concretization tools, school equipment with teaching aids, ICT cabinets, and school safety conditions'. This field has an overall performance at the level of 66.60% (Ibid). In general, 'in education indicators, the data reported by municipalities has not been complete, so the percentages obtained may represent a relative accuracy value'. (Ibid) This indicator is followed up with interviews with municipal officials focusing on Youth facilities, as explained below.

Besides the abovementioned fields assessment from the MLGA Performance Management System, structured interviews are being held (See list of interviews in Annex 1.) in all ten municipalities to assess the following fields of interest: Municipal Youth budgeting; Human resources needed/Youth volunteers' profiles; Present municipal youth facilities; Training needed of the actual municipal staff, and since the subprojects can include minor civil works in form of rehabilitation of buildings and public spaces in which case special conditions are required in the preparation of documentation and supervision, selected municipalities have to: Facilitate capital investment subgrant beneficiaries to obtain environmental, construction and/or other official permits that may be required and making sure that the proposed investments are in line with their local development plans; Conducting regular supervision of capital investments sub-projects and reporting to the Ministry about any irregularities in the implementation, including those related to environmental protection; Appointing engineering staff to facilitate the evaluation of subprojects if needed and; Carrying out operations and

maintenance for any municipal infrastructure or equipment (such as parks, playground equipment).

In the table below, these aspects of municipal capacities have been summarized:

Municipality	Trainings needed of the municipal staff	Youth volunteers to improve municipally provided services	Youth oriented budgets ¹	Present municipal youth facilities and structures	Capacity for technical supervision of subprojects
Hani Elezit	Volunteerism; Local economic development Gender Equality; Inclusion of Youth in decision-making processes; Paid internships	Construction engineer; Social worker Environmentalism; Project development/management (assigned for youth-oriented projects)	1.29 %	Sports hall; Career orientation center; Youth center; Local youth action councils	Yes
Rahovec	Volunteerism; Local economic development; Inclusion of Youth in decision-making processes; Paid internships	Environmentalism; Social worker; Project writers	7,079%	Sports hall; Cultural; Center Youth center; Local youth action councils	Yes
Skenderaj	Volunteerism; Local economic development Gender Equality; Inclusion of Youth in decision-making processes; Paid internships; Inclusion of people with disabilities	Construction engineer; Finances; Environmentalism; Social worker; Project development/management (assigned for youth-oriented projects); Public and social media	2.4 %	Sports hall; Cultural; Center Youth center; Local youth action councils	No
Vushtrri	Volunteerism; Local economic development	Construction engineer; Ecologist; Architect;	2.38%	Sports hall; Cultural center; Youth center and	No

¹ There is no specific budget line for the youth-oriented budgets. The calculation done by the municipalities include specifically the subvention budget line (youth projects supported, youth centers and youth action councils, scholarships provided, etc.)

	Gender Equality; Inclusion of Youth in decision-making processes; Paid internships;	Social worker; Project development/management (assigned for youth-oriented projects)		local youth action councils.	
Junik	Volunteerism; Local economic development; Paid internships; Administration	Construction engineer; Architect; Financial officers; Environmentalism; Social worker; Project development/management (assigned for youth-oriented projects); Administration	1.07 %	The youth center, local youth action council	No
Zveçan	Volunteerism; Local economic development Inclusion of Youth in decision making; Paid internships; Ecology, promotion of cultural and historical heritage, sport	Construction engineer; Environmentalism; Social worker Project development/management (assigned for youth-oriented projects); psychologist; legal specialists	0.45 %	Sports hall; Youth center; Local youth action council; University	Yes
Ranillug	Local economic development; Inclusion of Youth in decision making; Paid Internships;	Construction engineer; Architect; Environmentalism; Social worker; Project writers	2.40 %	Sports hall; Cultural center; Youth center	No
Ferizaj	Volunteerism; Human Rights; Gender equality; Local economic development; Inclusion of Youth in decision	Environmentalism; Project development/management (assigned for youth- oriented projects) Social workers	1.15 %	Sports hall; Cultural house; Local youth action council; University	Yes

	making; Paid internships; public services,				
Kaçanik	Volunteerism; Gender equality; Local economic development; Inclusion of Youth in decision making; Paid Internships	Construction engineer; Environmentalist; Project development/management (assigned for youth- oriented projects)	0.64 %	Sports hall; Cultural house; career center; youth center; local youth action council	Yes
Glllogoc	Volunteerism; Local economic development; Inclusion of Youth in decision making; Paid internships;	Construction engineer; Architect Environmentalist; Project development/management (assigned for youth- oriented projects)	8.50%	Sports hall; Cultural house; youth center; local youth action council	No

CONCLUSION

An overarching conclusion stemming from the analysis is that all ten municipalities assessed do not have a specific code related to financing youth activities. All ten municipalities have noted that they need capacity building, and on the type of support needed for the project implementation, the following were identified as most pressing capacity-building needs:

- Volunteerism, nine out of ten municipalities;
- Paid internships for specific position/profiles, ten out of ten municipalities;
- Inclusion of Youth in decision making, nine out of ten municipalities;
- Local economic development, nine out of ten municipalities;
- Gender equality/representation;
- Services provided by municipalities related to culture, youth, and sports, including sports facilities

Assessments indicated that municipalities also require Youth-related community facility improvements (e.g., repair and enhancement of youth centers, parks, classrooms, youth-friendly spaces in health centers and libraries).

All ten municipalities have declared the need for support on capacities to supervise works and technical acceptance of projects. At the same time, there is a considerable capacity for sub-project implementation assessment/evaluation of Youth-related projects and activities.

There are three potential gaps identified: 1) competitive and transparent sub granting processes within the municipalities regarding youth-oriented projects and 2) demand-driven youth programming - capacity to respond to youth needs through targeted services subproject and other youth activities and 3) improvement of youth orientation of general services (e.g., use of social media, youth-oriented marketing of services/activities, enhanced collaboration with youth on monitoring public services, etc.).

ANNEXES

Annex 1. List of interviews

Nr.	Municipality	Person	Position
1.	Zvecan	Milan Radomirovic	Director of Youth and Sport Dep.
2.	Kaçanik	Fatmir Qaka	Coordinator for Youth, Culture and Sports.
3.	Hani i Elezit	Refki Suma	Mayor of municipality
4.	Hani i Elezit	Mazllum Qajani	Deputy mayor of Municipality
5.	Hani i Elezit	Menduh Vlashi	Director of Education, Youth and Sport Dep.
6.	Skenderaj	Arben Mehmeti	Director of Youth and Sport Dep
7.	Glllogoc	Arben Shala	Deputy Mayor of Glllogoc
8.	Glllogoc	Shqipe Zogu	Director of Youth and Sport Dep.
9.	Glllogoc	Kajtaž Kastrati	Official on Youth and Sport Dep.
10.	Junik	Leonita Jasiqi	Director of Administration
11.	Junik	Hasan Krasniqi	Director of Urbanism
12.	Rahovec	Fatmir Iska	Deputy Mayor of Municipality
13.	Rahovec	Muharem Morina	Official for youth, culture and sports
14.	Ranillug	Vladica Aritonovic	Mayor of Municipality
15.	Ranillug	Aleksandra Nikolić	Chief of Mayors cabinet
16.	Ferizaj	Arton Kavazi	Deputy mayor of Municipality
17.	Ferizaj	Agron Zhilipotoku	Chief of Youth and Sport Dep.
18.	Ferizaj	Xhemile Murati	Director Youth and Sport Dep.
19.	Ferizaj	Flamur Sallahu	Official from Youth and Sport Dep
20.	Vushtrri	Arta Ismajli	Director Youth and Sport Dep

Annex 2. The questionnaire with municipal officials

Municipality: _____

Mayor of the municipality: _____

Tel: _____

E-mail: _____

1. Does your Municipality need capacity building support?

YES ☐

NO ☐

2. In which sectors does your municipality need more support in the implementation of youth projects?

☐ Voluntarism

☐ Human rights

☐ Equality

☐ Local economic recovery

☐ Inclusion in decision making processes

☐ Paid internships

☐ Other ? _____

3. Identify positions where paid internships in your municipality would help improve performance and provide services to young people more effectively.

☐ Civil engineer

☐ Architect

☐ Financier

☐ Environmentalists

☐ Social worker

☐ Project developer

☐ Other? _____

4. To what % does your municipality allocate the annual municipal budget to the youth sector?

- Amount _____ %

5. What youth services and facilities does your Municipality have?

- Sports center

- Cultural Center

- Career development center

- Youth Center

- Local Youth Action Council

- University

- Other _____

6. Does your municipality have sufficient capacity to cover the responsibility for supervising the works and technical acceptance of youth projects?

YES ☐

NO ☐

7. If not, what is your proposal for capacity building of the municipality in the supervision of works / technical acceptance of projects?

8. Does your municipality have the capacity to evaluate projects supported by public funds?

YES ☐

NO ☐

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